

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02825 141335Z
ACTION SS-25

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R 141151Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4289
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2825
EXDIS
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR
SUBJ: CALL ON PRESIDENT SARKIS

1. PAID CALL ON PRESIDENT SARKIS JUNE 13 TO DISCUSS
MY RECENT CONSULTATION IN WASHINGTON AND CURRENT
SITUATION IN LEBANON. FOUND THAT FOREIGN MINISTER
BOUTROS HAD BRIEFED HIM FULLY ON OUR JUNE 10
CONVERSATION (BEIRUT 2785) AND THEREFORE DID NOT
REPEAT MY PRESENTATION. SAID THAT SECRETARY VANCE
SENT HIS GREETINGS AND LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING HIM
AGAIN IN LATE JULY. REITERATED MY IMPRESSION THAT
ADMINISTRATION FULLY COMMITTED TO FINDING WORKABLE
SOLUTION TO MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. ASKED HOW PRESIDENT
WAS GETTING ALONG AND HOW HE REGARDED SITUATION
IN LEBANON.

2. PRESIDENT REPLIED THAT LEBANON WAS MAKING
PROGRESS SLOWLY BUT WAS CAUGHT IN VICIOUS CIRCLE.
HE COULD NOT GET ON WITH RECONSTRUCTION BECAUSE
SOME PEOPLE WERE DEMANDING SETTLEMENT OF POLITICAL
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ISSUES FIRST; HE COULD NOT SETTLE POLITICAL ISSUES
BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS OF DISLOCATION AND DESTRUCTION
CAUSED BY WAR. ARAB SOLIDARITY WITH REGARD TO
RESTORATION OF ORDER AND RECONSTRUCTION OF LEBANON
WHICH HAD MARKED RIYADH CONFERENCE WAS EVAPORATING.
SAUDIS WERE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE ELEMENT IN EQUATION,
ASIDE FROM SYRIANS, AND THEY WERE UNHAPPY WITH

INCREASING SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN COUNTRY. THEY WERE THEREFORE NOT COOPERATING WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO ACCORD TO DEGREE TEBANESE HAD EXPECTED.

3. I NOTED THAT I HAD MET WITH SECRETARY JUST BEFORE HIS MEETING WITH PRINCE SAUD IN WASHINGTON AT WHICH THE SECRETARY HAD DISCUSSED LEBANON, AMONG OTHER MATTERS. I DID NOT KNOW DETAILS OF THAT CONVERSATION BUT HAD BRIEFED SECRETARY ON CAIRO ACCORD AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROBLEMS. I DID NOT KNOW WHAT SAUDIS PLANS WERE WITH REGARD FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. WITH REGARD CAIRO ACCORD I GATHERED SYRIANS WERE MOVING GRADUALLY AND CAREFULLY TO IMPLEMENT IT. I FRANKLY DID NOT SEE THAT WE COULD DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

4. SARKIS SAID SYRIANS WERE MOVING GRADUALLY AND HE HOPED THERE WOULD BE SOME PROGRESS. HE UNDERSTOOD OUR INABILITY TO HELP. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE HOWEVER THAT SYRIANS WERE NOT GETTING SORT OF SUPPORT THEY SHOULD FROM SAUDIS, KUWAITIS AND EGYPTIANS.

5. I ASKED ABOUT SITUATION IN SOUTH. SARKIS SAID HE WAS GETTING CONTRADICTORY REPORTS FROM LEBANESE INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS AS TO WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF ARTILLERY EXCHANGES IN THE BORDER AREAS. HE SAID EVEN PALESTINIANS WERE SAYING INITIATIVE HAD BEEN TAKEN BY THE REJECTIONISTS. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER
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THAT WAS TRUE HOWEVER. I SAID WE HAD IMPRESSION LEBANESE FORCES WERE NOT IN POSITION TO TAKE OFFENSIVE AND THAT PALESTINIANS HAD NO INTEREST IN PROVOKING ISRAELIS. IT ALSO SEEMED EVIDENT THAT ISRAELIS HAD NO INTEREST IN PROVOKING A WAR IN THAT AREA. SARKIS ASKED IF WE HAD DISCUSSED THIS WITH BEGIN. I SAID I DID NOT THINK SO, BUT BEGIN PRESUMABLY WOULD BE UNDER SAME RESTRAINTS AS HIS PREDECESSOR IN THIS REGARD.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH SARKIS GAVE IMPRESSION OF BEING RELAXED, HIS REMARKS ABOUT SLOW RATE OF PROGRESS CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH HIS EARLIER ASSURANCES THAT HE HAD A PLAN THAT WAS WORKING SATISFACTORILY. (GHASSAN TUENI, WHO SAW HIM JUST BEFORE ME, REPORTS HE FOUND SARKIS DEPRESSED, AND TUENI HAD POINTED OUT TO HIM THAT IT WAS HIS OWN FAULT FOR NOT MOVING MORE DECISIVELY.) NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD A RATHER WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION ON PERSONAL

SUBJECTS AFTER THE ABOVE EXCHANGE WAS FINISHED,
AND I FOUND SARKIS MORE FORTHCOM NO THEN IN ANY
PREVIOUS CONVERSATION.
PARKER

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O, MR. GREENLEE 6/14/77.

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NNN

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